THE LEGEND OF ONIKIRIMARU

- CHAPTER 11: THE CAPE OF SEVEN DEMONS

KEI KUSUNOKI

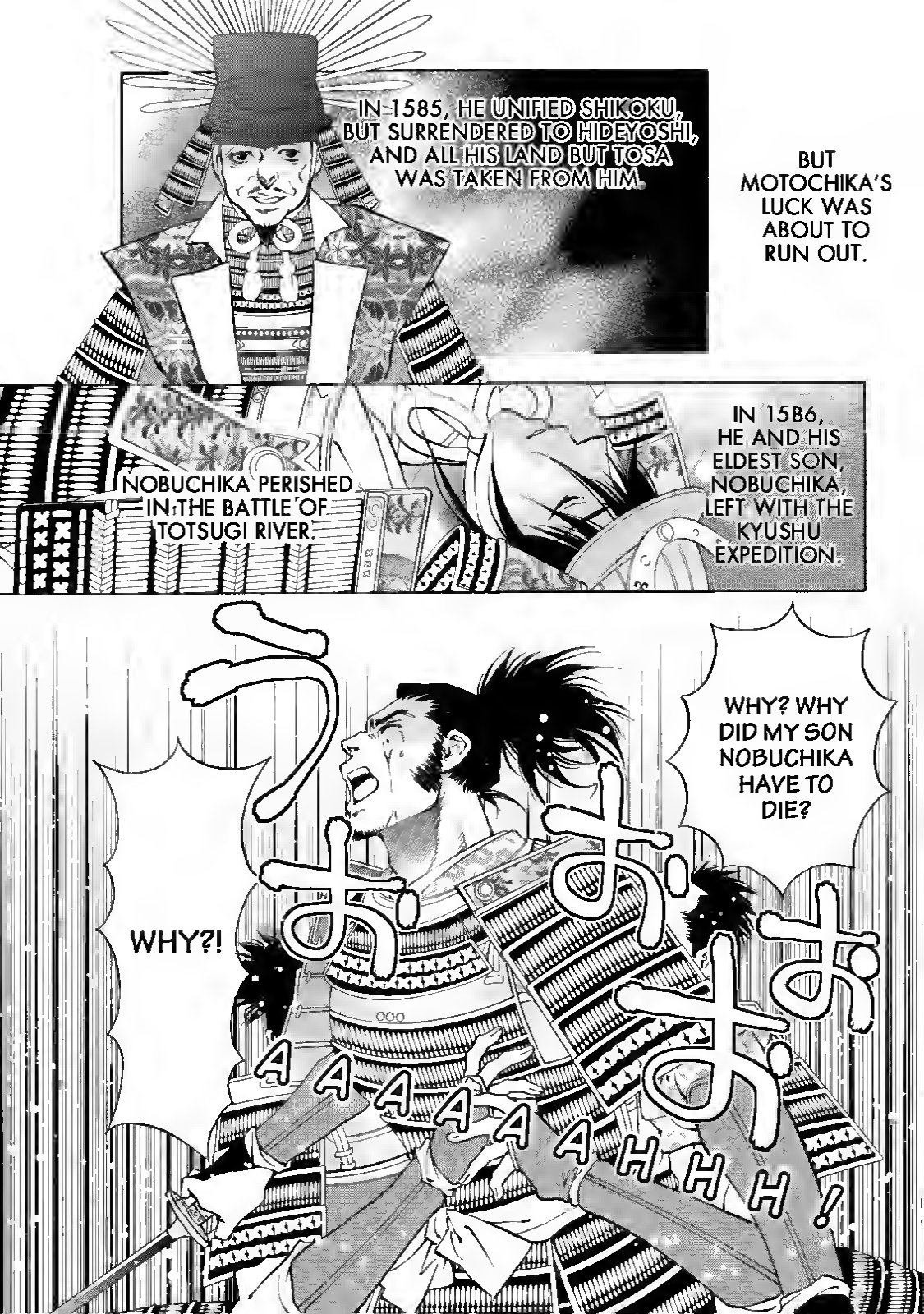
THEY SAY THERE ARE NO FOXES IN TOSA.
NOR ANY DE-MONS
NATSU! COME ON!
わん WOOF
わん WOOF
わん WOOF
I'M COMING!
INSTEAD, THERE ARE WE INUGAMI WIELDERS...
...AND THE WARLORD MOTOCHIKA CHOSOKABE, A MAN LIKE UNTO A DEMON.

YOU ARE THE ONE WHO IS NO SAMURAI! YOU GOT DRUNK AT A BANQUET IN ENEMY TERRITORY!
SLASH
SAIROKU TEMPLE
SPLURT!
MASATSUGU SHINKAI
CURSE YOU, MOTOCHIKA CHOSOKABE! WHAT SORT OF SAMURAI ATTACKS A MAN AT A PEACE CONFERENCE?

MOTOCHIKA CHOSOKABE WAS KNOWN AS THE "KINDEST MAN IN TOSA," BUT IN TRUTH, HE UNIFIED SHIKOKU THROUGH BETRAYAL, TREACHERY, AND SNEAK ATTACKS.
HE DESTROYED HIS BENEFACTORS, THE ICHIJO CLAN, AND ENTRAPPED THE FRIENDLY GENERALS OF THE SURROUNDING COUNTRIES. HE WAS TRULY A DEMON.
I AM THE DEMON OF TOSAI
FOR HOW CAN ONE WHO FEARS THE HATRED OF OTHERS UNIFY SHIKOKU, LET ALONE JAPAN?

I'M SURE THAT EVEN ONIKIRIMARU WOULD RUN FROM YOU, AND THE INUGAMI WIELDERS WOULD FLEE AS WELL.
CHIKANAO HISATAKE
SPLENDID, SIR.
ONIKIRIMARU? THE INUGAMI WIELDERS? WHO ARE THEY?
ONIKIRIMARU IS THE DEMON'S ONE TRUE ENEMY.
THE RUMORS SAY HE IS A DEMON WHO SLAYS DEMONS.

THE INUGAMI WIELDERS ARE ALWAYS CURSING SOMETHING.
NO, IT'S JUST A RUMOR I HEARD.
THEY USE EVIL SPIRITS CALLED INUGAMI, OR "DOG GODS," TO KILL OTHERS. DEFEATED LORDS GO TO THEM TO SEEK REVENGE ON ENEMY GENERALS.
LORD HISATAKE, IS IT TRUE THAT THE INUGAMI WIELDERS INVOLVE THEMSELVES IN WARS?
THERE ARE MANY IN TOSA WHO BELIEVE IN THE INUGAMI.
HRM. I'LL REMEMBER THAT.


IN 1585, HE UNIFIED SHIKOKU, BUT SURRENDERED TO HIDEYOSHI, AND ALL HIS LAND BUT TOSA WAS TAKEN FROM HIM.
BUT MOTOCHIKA'S LUCK WAS ABOUT TO RUN OUT.
IN 15B6, HE AND HIS ELDEST SON, NOBUCHIKA, LEFT WITH THE KYUSHU EXPEDITION.
NOBUCHIKA PERISHED IN THE BATTLE OF TOTSUGI RIVER.
WHY? WHY DID MY SON NOBUCHIKA HAVE TO DIE?
WHY?!
おおおお

IF I DON'T STOP THEM, THE INUGAMI WIELDERS WILL DESTROY THE COUNTRY! KILL THEM ALL!
犬神ヲ知ル状
ORDER FOR THE DESTRUCTION OF THE INUGAMI
MOTO-CHIKA WENT MAD AFTER THE LOSS OF HIS SON.
N-NO, IT'S PROBABLY...
IT MUST BE, YES?!
COULD IT BE THE WORK OF THE INUGAMI?
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KILL ALL THE INUGAMI WIELDERS!
THE CHOSOKABE ARMIES BURNED EVERY VILLAGE THAT BELIEVED IN THE INUGAMI. IT WAS AN ANCIENT WITCH HUNT.
DAMN YOU, MOTOCHIKA CHOSOKABE!

THIS HATRED IS GREAT ENOUGH THAT THEY COULD BECOME A DEMON AT ANY MOMENT!
WHAT IS THIS...
I FOUND A SURVIVOR OF THE INUGAMI WIELDERS!
WHAT IS THIS CRY, THAT IS SO LIKE A DEMON?
HEEE
HEEE
HEEE

YOU MONSTER...
YOU WILL REGRET THAT YOU ANGERED THE INUGAMI WIELDERS UNTIL THE DAY YOU DIE!
AWWOOOOOO!

YIPE
S.LASH
EEEP!
I KILL DEMONS, THOUGH I DO NOT SAVE MEN.
BUT YOU ARE NO MERE HUMAN.
WHAT DID YOU DO TO MY INUGAMI?!

MY NAME IS NATSU. I'M AN INUGAMI WIELDER.
PEOPLE SAY I'M POS-SESSED BY AN INU-GAMI.
WHAT ARE YOU?
HEY!

THESE INUGAMI ARE PASSED DOWN FOR GENERATIONS, AND ESPECIALLY LIKE TO HAUNT YOUNG GIRLS.
TO CREATE AN INUGAMI, A DOG IS BURIED UP TO ITS NECK, AND THEN STARVED TO DEATH.
THE HEAD IS CUT OFF, AND SECRETLY BURIED BENEATH A ROAD.
AFTER IT HAS BEEN TRAMPLED UPON MANY TIMES, IT IS UNEARTHED AND ITS EVIL SPIRIT IS USED TO DO ITS MASTER'S BIDDING.
SUCH PEOPLE ARE SAID TO BE POSSESSED BY THE INUGAMI.
はっ
GASP

YOU'RE AWAKE?
WHY DIDN'T YOU KILL ME?
I AM A DEMON WHOSE DESTINY IT IS TO SLAY DEMONS. AND DEMONS ARE ALL I SLAY.
THAT ANIMAL SPIRIT HAS DISAPPEARED WITHIN YOUR BODY.
YOU SAID YOU WERE AN INUGAMI WIELDER, RIGHT?

OUR CLAN USES THOSE SPIRITS TO CURSE OTHERS.
THOSE WHO DON'T UNDERSTAND US HATE AND FEAR US, BUT THERE ARE THOSE WHO WORSHIP US TOO.
DID YOU CURSE THE CHO-SOKABE?
HNGH...
STAY PUT UNTIL YOUR WOUNDS HEAL.
WE DID NOT! WE CURSE ONLY ONE THING...
THANKFULLY, THERE ARE NO DEMONS IN THIS LAND.

NO... THERE WILL BE SOON.
SOON THERE WILL BE DEMONS IN TOSA.
TO DO WHAT ONLY A GIRL POSSESSED BY AN INUGAMI CAN DO.
STAGGER
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

OOTAKASA CASTLE
I CAN SAFELY TURN THINGS OVER TO MY HEIR, CHIKUMA-MARU.
CHIKUMAMARU: LATER MORICHIKA CHOSOKABE
MURMUR
NOW THE CURSE OF THE INUGAMI IS GONE!

NOT YOUR SECOND SON, CHIKATOMO, OR YOUR THIRD SON, CHIKATADA, BUT CHIKUMAMARU?
INDEED! AND I SHALL MARRY HIM TO THE DAUGHTER OF MY ELDEST SON, NOBU-CHIKA!
CHIKUMAMARU IS THE SPITTING IMAGE OF NOBUCHIKA, AFTER ALL!
UNCLE! PLEASE RECONSIDER! THE ELDEST SHOULD INHERIT YOUR TITLE!
AND IT IS WRONG TO MARRY AN UNCLE AND NIECE!
KIRA CHIKAMASA, THE SON OF MOTOCHIKA'S YOUNGER BROTHER, KIRA CHIKASADA.
YOU WOULD DEFY ME?
GRIT

HOW DARE YOU?!
LORD MOTO-CHIKA...
...A WORD, IF I MAY.
IT'S POSSIBLE THAT CHIKAMASA IS THE ONE WHO SENT THE INUGAMI WIELDER'S CURSE.
WHAT?
THEN, THE ONE WHO KILLED MY BELOVED SON, NOBUCHIKA, WAS KIRA CHIKAMASA?!
DAMN YOU! DAMN YOU! DAMN YOU! DAMN YOU!

EVEN IF YOU ARE MY NEPHEW, THERE SHALL BE NO FORGIVE-NESS! YOU MUST COMMIT SEPPUKU!
IN 1588, AT HISATAKE CHIKANAO'S SUGGESTION, KIRA CHIKAMASA, A LORD WITH THE POTENTIAL FOR GREATNESS, COMMITTED SEPPUKU.

HOW FOOLISH, TO BELIEVE SUCH AN EVIL MAN AND SLAY YOUR LOYAL NEPHEW AND RETAINER!
WHAT A DIRE ERROR YOU HAVE MADE! YOU MUST NOT TRUST YOUR RETAINER, HISATAKE CHIKANAO!

カ!?
GRR!

SILENCE! SILENCE!
SILENCE!

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WHEEZE
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WHEEZE
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WHEEZE
LORD MOTO-CHIKA...
HISATAKE... HAVE I MADE A MISTAKE?
NO... YOU HAVE DONE SPLENDIDLY.

AFTER OYAMASA COMMITTED SEPPUKU,
SEVEN MORE WERE SLAIN..
NAGAYOSHI HIDANOKAMI.
SOUANJI SHINZEI. SHOUGANO HIROBEI.
KIRA HIKODAYUU. SHIROUCHI TAISHUBOU.
HIWADAYO ZAEMON. OHIMAJIN SHIROU.
CURSE YOU!

HOOOOWL
オオオオ
WHAT A POWERFUL DEMONIC AURA...
COULD IT BE NATSU?!
IF AN INUGAMI WIELDER TURNED INTO A DEMON, HOW POWERFUL WOULD SHE BECOME?
IF YOU HAVE BECOME A DEMON, I WILL SLAY YOU, NATSU!

SAGAWA CASTLE
BRING ME SAKE! LET US CELEBRATE THE FACT THAT THOSE SEVEN ARE NO LONGER IN MY WAY!
YOU'VE BEEN SO HAPPY LATELY, MY LORD.
THE EVIL RETAINER SHALL NOT BE ALLOWED TO LIVE.
FATHER!
OH! COME HERE!

WHAT?
HE MUST PERISH.
THE EVIL RETAINER SHALL NOT BE ALLOWED TO LIVE.
W-WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO YOU ALL?

THE HANDS OF DEMONS!

SPLU
RRTCH

AAAHHH!
SEVEN OF HISATAKE MASANAO'S CHILDREN DIED STRANGE DEATHS, IT IS SAID...
"GNOSSNOSSNOSS"
TREMBLE TREMBLE TREMBLE

YOU'RE NEXT, MOTOCHIKA!
CURSE YOU, MOTOCHIKA!
HAVE I NOT MADE A TERRIBLE MISTAKE?
I KILLED MY BEST RETAINERS IN A MOMENTARY LOSS OF CONTROL.

PERHAPS THIS IS THE CURSE OF THE INUGAMI...
DAMN YOU! DAMN YOU!
DAMN YOU, MOTOCHIKA!
ROOOO

THESE... THESE ARE NO INUGAMI! THEY ARE...
SEVEN...
SLASH!!

INDEED! THESE ARE NO INU-GAMI!
THESE ARE THE DEMONS YOU HAVE BROUGHT FORTH!
GRAAAAAAH
I UNDERSTAND THAT THE RAGE OF THESE SEVEN RETAINERS BETRAYED BY THEIR LORD CAUSED THEM TO BECOME DEMONS, BUT...

IF THEY ARE DEMONS, THEN I, ONIKIRIMARU, SHALL SLAY THEM!
FIVE MORE!
GRAAAAAH!
A-ARE YOU THE DEMON'S NATURAL ENEMY?
YOUR BLADE IS CALLED ONIKIRI-MARU-

MOTO-CHIKA.
YOU ARE THE ONE WHO BURNED MY VILLAGE AND SLEW MY CLAN.
NOW FEEL THE POWER OF AN INUGAMI WIELDER! CHOSOKABE MOTOCHIKA!

DON'T DO IT! NATSU!
NEITHER HUMAN...
...NOR DEMON.

AN
INUGAMI WIELDER
IS SIMPLY AN
INUGAMI WIELDER.

THE INUGAMI WIELDERS USED OUR POWER TO PROTECT THE INUGAMI FROM DEMONS.
WE CURSED NONE BUT THE DEMONS.
THE REASON THERE ARE NO DEMONS IN TOSA IS THAT THE INUGAMI KILLED THEM ALL.

WIELDERS OF MONSTERS MORE POWERFUL THAN DEMONS...
I HAD NO IDEA SUCH A CLAN EXISTED IN TOSA.
THEN I BEG YOU, PLEASE CONTINUE TO DESTROY THE DEMONS IF THEY APPEAR IN TOSA AGAIN!
I BEG YOU!
I CANNOT DO THAT ALONE...
WHY?

YOU KILLED ALL OF US INUGAMI WIELDERS.
THEY SAY THERE ARE NO FOXES OR DEMONS IN TOSA...
OR AT LEAST THEY DID, WHILE THE INUGAMI WIELDERS STILL LIVED.